

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

**Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0136-EA
RIGHT-OF-WAY UTU-0-005579**

PREPARING OFFICE

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Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-UT-G010–2015–0136-EA
RIGHT-OF-WAY UTU-0–005579

Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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Table of Contents

Finding of No Significant Impact	vii
DOI-BLM-UT-G010–2015–0136–EA	vii
Signatures:	vii
DECISION RECORD	ix
Compliance, Monitoring, Stipulations	ix
Plan Conformance and Consistency	ix
Compliance with NEPA:	x
Rationale / Authorities / Public Involvement	x
Appeal or Protest Opportunities:	xi
Authorizing Official:	xi
1. Environmental Assessment Introduction	1
1.1. Identifying Information:	1
1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project:	1
1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:	1
1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:	1
1.1.4. Identify the lease, serial, or case file number:	1
1.1.5. Applicant Name:	2
1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:	2
1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:	2
2. Proposed Action and Alternatives	3
2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:	5
2.2. No Action Alternative	7
2.3. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail	7
2.4. Conformance With BLM Land Use Plan	8
2.5. Relationships To Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans	8
3. Affected Environment:	9
3.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources	11
3.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	11
3.3. Vegetation	11
4. Environmental Effects:	15
4.1. Proposed Action	17
4.1.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources	17
4.1.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	17
4.1.3. Vegetation	17
4.2. No Action	17

4.2.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources	17
4.2.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	17
4.2.3. Vegetation	17
4.3. Cumulative Impacts	18
4.3.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources	18
4.3.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	18
4.3.3. Vegetation	18
5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:	19
6. List of Preparers	23
7. Acronyms	27
Appendix A. Interdisciplinary Checklist	31

List of Tables

Table 3.1. Dominant Vegetation in Project Area	11
Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted	21
Table 6.1. List of Preparers	25

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Finding of No Significant Impact

DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0136-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts (per Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0136-EA), I have determined that the proposed action with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the environment and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Signatures:

Approved by:

Jerry Kenczka
Assistant Field Manager,
Lands and Minerals

Date

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DECISION RECORD

Decision

It is my decision to authorize Moon Lake Electric Associations amendment application for Right-of-Way UTU-0-005579, to relinquish portions of the existing power line, rebuild and replace existing power poles and power line, and to construct two new portions of power line, and to proceed as set out in the Proposed Action of the Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-UT-G010-2015-0136-EA) subject to the applicant committed measures, stipulations, Plan of Development (POD), compliance and monitoring. This alternative is hereafter called the Selected Alternative. This decision applies to BLM-administered lands only.

I have determined that authorizing this selected alternative is in the public interest, and will minimize impacts so that no undue disturbance will occur.

The proposed relinquishment, rebuild and replace, and new power line will be constructed on Public lands within the following legal description: Salt Lake Meridian, UT

T. 5 S., R. 22 E., Sec. 26, N2N2; Sec. 27, NENE.

The length of the relinquishment for the transmission line and distribution line is 3,398.92 feet, and 3.91 acres reclaimed.

The length of the new proposed construction for the transmission line is 3,267.15 feet and the new Distribution Line is 91.15 feet, both with a 50 foot width, approximately 3.86 acres of new disturbance, more or less. The right-of-way grant as amended is now 163,461.38 feet in length, a variable width of 20-100 feet, and 375.240 acres more or less.

Compliance, Monitoring, Stipulations

Compliance and monitoring checks will be conducted in accordance with BLM Regulations. No Stipulations or Mitigation measures were identified by the Resource Specialists in the analysis of this EA.

Plan Conformance and Consistency

The proposed action and alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with one or more of the following BLM Land Use Plan and the associated decision(s):

The selected alternative has been reviewed, and found to be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 31, 2008). The RMP/ROD decision allows for processing applications, permits, operating plans, mineral exchanges, leases on public lands in accordance with policy and guidance and allows for management of public lands to support goals and objectives of other resources programs, respond to public requests for land use authorizations, and acquire administrative and public access where necessary (RMP/ROD p. 86).

It has been determined that the proposed action and alternative(s) would not conflict with other decisions throughout the plan.

Uintah County: The proposed action is also consistent with the "Uintah County General Plan (Uintah County 2012-as amended)". The Uintah County General Plan contains specific policy

statements addressing public and multiple-use resource use and development, access, and wildlife management. In general, the Plan indicates support for development proposals through its emphasis on multiple-use public land management practices and responsible use and optimum utilization of public land resources. The County, through the Plan, supports the development of natural resources as they become available as new technology allows.

Compliance with NEPA:

This EA was prepared by the BLM in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and in compliance with all applicable regulations and laws passed subsequently, including the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and the U.S. Department of Interior requirements and guidelines listed in the BLM Manual Handbook H-1790-1. This EA assesses the environmental effects of the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Rationale / Authorities / Public Involvement

The decision to authorize the relinquishment, rebuild and new construction of the power line, has been made in consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. This decision has been made after considering impacts to resources within the Vernal Field Office while accommodating Moon Lake Electric Associations desire to relinquish, rebuild, and construct the new power line.

Identification of issue(s) for this assessment was accomplished by considering any resources that could be affected by implementation of one of the alternatives.

Issues identified by BLM Specialists are documented in Appendix A Interdisciplinary Team Checklist.

Alternatives Considered

Alternative A: Proposed Action

Moon Lake Electric Association proposes to amend Right-of-Way UTU-0-005579, by relinquishing approximately 3,398.92 feet of existing transmission and distribution power line and poles, rebuilding the existing power line by replacing the existing poles and line, and constructing a new transmission and distribution line approximately 3,358.80 feet in length, with a 50-foot permanent width.

Alternative B: No Action

Under the No Action alternative, BLM would not approve Moon Lake Electric Associations proposal to relinquish, rebuild, and construct the transmission and distribution line on public lands. The no action alternative effectively constitutes denial of the Proposed Action. This alternative was not selected because it would not respond to the applicant's need for the amendment of the right-of-way.

The authority for this decision is pursuant to Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C.1761).

The proposed action was posted to the public BLM E-Planning website with its assigned NEPA number on June 19, 2015. To date, no questions or comments have been received. A public

comment period was not offered due to the proposed action being similar in nature to other projects in the immediate area.

Appeal or Protest Opportunities:

Protest/Appeal Language: This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (at the above address) within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition (request) pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 2801.10 or 43 CFR 2881.10 for a stay (suspension) of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below.

Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Authorizing Official:

s/ Jerry Kenczka
Assistant Field Manager, Lands and Minerals

9/15/2015
Date

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Chapter 1. Environmental Assessment

Introduction

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This Environmental Assessment has been prepared to analyze the potential impacts of Moon Lake Electric Associations proposal to amend Right-of-Way Grant UTU-0–005579, to relinquish, rebuild, and construct a new power line.

The EA is a site-specific analysis of potential impacts that could result with the implementation of a proposed action or alternatives to the proposed action. An EA assists the BLM in project planning and ensuring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and in making a determination as to whether any “significant” impacts could result from the analyzed actions. “Significance” is defined by NEPA and is found in regulation 40 CFR 1508.27. An EA provides evidence for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a statement of “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI). A FONSI is a document that briefly presents the reasons why implementation of the selected alternative would not result in “significant” environmental impacts (effects) beyond those already addressed in the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan (VFORMP), October 2008. If the decision maker determines that this project has “significant” impacts following the analysis in the EA, then an EIS would be prepared for the project. If not, a Decision Record may be signed for the EA approving the alternative selected.

1.1. Identifying Information:

1.1.1. Title, EA number, and type of project:

Moon Lake Electric Association amendment to relinquish, rebuild, and construct a new power line.

DOI-BLM-UT-G010–2015–0136–EA

1.1.2. Location of Proposed Action:

Salt Lake Meridian or Uintah Special Meridian

T. 5 S., R. 22 E.,

Sec. 26, N2N2, Sec. 27, NENE.

See Appendix B Map

1.1.3. Name and Location of Preparing Office:

Lead Office - Vernal Field Office

170 South 500 East

Vernal Utah 84078

1.1.4. Identify the lease, serial, or case file number:

Case File: UTU-0–005579

1.1.5. Applicant Name:

Moon Lake Electric Association Inc.

1.2. Purpose and Need for Action:

The BLM's need is to consider approval of the application for Moon Lake Electric Association Inc.s proposal to amend Right-of-Way UTU-0-005579, to relinquish, rebuild, realign and construct a new power line in accordance with Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, as amended through September 1999, (90 Stat. 2776; 43 U.S.C. 1761)

BLM's purpose is to avoid or reduce impacts on sensitive resource values associated with the project area and prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the public lands.

1.3. Scoping, Public Involvement and Issues:

During preparation of the EA, public involvement consisted of posting the proposal on the e-planning NEPA website. No public comment or inquiries to date have been received. The proposed action was reviewed by an interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists. For a list of all resources considered, refer to Appendix A.

Other Right-of-Way holders located in the project area were mailed notice letters notifying them of the proposed action.

Chapter 2. Proposed Action and Alternatives

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2.1. Description of the Proposed Action:

This EA focuses on the Proposed Action, as well as, the No Action Alternative. No unresolved conflicts were identified that required the consideration of another alternative.

PROPOSED ACTION

Purpose and Need for the Facility

Moon Lake Electric Association (MLEA) has submitted an application for an Amendment to right-of-way UTU-05579. Due to the age of the existing transmission line and the existing distribution line, MLEA is requesting the amendment for the purpose of relinquishing, re-routing and rebuilding the existing transmission line and existing distribution line, by removing and replacing old poles and guy wires, and installing new poles and guy wires, on BLM owned or operated property. The transmission and distribution line will be rebuilt to serve the needs of MLEA existing consumers and existing facilities. The transmission line in Section 26 and Section 27; T5S/R22E in Uintah County, Utah will include both "H" Frame and Single Pole structures; with an operating voltage of 69 kV. The distribution line in Section 26, T5S/R22E in Uintah County, Utah has an operating voltage of 7.2/12.5 kV.

Right of Way Location

The proposed relinquishment, rebuild/ re-route will be on public lands within the following description: SLM, UT

T. 5 S., R. 22 E., Sec. 26, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$; and Sec. 27, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

(See exhibit Maps)

The relinquishments are 3,398.92 feet, 50 feet wide, and approximately 3.91 acres that will all be reclaimed. The total length of the transmission line rebuild is approximately 4,237.52 feet. There will be minimal disturbance on the rebuild portion of the power line. The new transmission and distribution construction length is approximately 3,358.80 feet, with a 50 foot wide easement and will encompass approximately 3.86 acres.

Facility Design Factors

This power line will meet the National Electrical Safety Code. All requirements with respect to clearance, temperature fluctuations, wind, voltage, span length, and structure heights are incorporated into all MLEA power line designs. MLEA will install raptor deterrent measures according to MLEA Avian Protection Plan, previously submitted to BLM VFO. MLEA power lines are designed with adequate clearances for Raptor protection. All materials used for MLEA power lines meets, or exceed industry standards.

Additional Components

This area of the county is in MLEA service territory. MLEA owns and maintains thousands of miles of power lines throughout its service territory. These lines are on Private, State, BLM, and Tribal Lands. Additional power lines may be required in the future.

Government Agencies Involved

BLM properties are involved with the transmission line and distribution line rebuild and re-route. SITLA properties are involved with the transmission line rebuild also.

Construction of Facilities

Construction will begin within 20 to 30 days of BLM approval and will take 20 to 150 days to complete. The transmission line re-build and re-route will have 19 new poles and 9 new anchors to be constructed and there will be 9 poles and 11 anchors to be removed on property operated by the BLM. The wood poles will extend 50 to 55 feet out of the ground.

The distribution line re-build and re-route will have (1) one new pole and (1) one new anchor to be constructed and there will be (1) one pole and zero anchors removed on property operated by the BLM. The wood pole will extend 34 feet out of the ground.

The construction crew will consist of 10 men to 14 men using bucket trucks, digger trucks, framing, rope and tension trailers, and smaller crew trucks, as well as backhoes. ROW flagging or engineering crews will consist of 1 to 4 men using a pickup truck(s), as well as foot travel.

It is anticipated that minimal clearing, grading or blade work will be needed for crews to access and construct this power line within the granted ROW 50 foot width, with exception of the holes drilled for pole and anchor installation. Construction travel will be confined to existing roads and the requested ROW.

Safety is very important to MLEA. Any holes which may need to be left open overnight, will be covered with planks to protect people and wildlife from injury.

No toxic substances are used in the construction of any MLEA power lines. All construction waste will be hauled back and disposed of in MLEA owned dumpsters.

The appropriate person to contact about the proposed ROW is Mary Stewart, Right-of-Way Agent for MLEA. She can be reached at 435.722.5418 W or 435.823.5962 C, or mastewart@mleainc.com.

Resource Values and Environmental Concerns

All surface disturbances will be kept to a minimum. Rubber tired vehicles are used for all construction. MLEA's surface disturbances are usually a two track, which is used periodically to maintain and patrol the power line as needed. MLEA will keep all vehicle travel to existing roads and within the granted ROW.

The visual impacts will be minimal. Wood poles that are treated with PENTA and non-reflective conductors will be used in the construction of this project.

Stabilization and Rehabilitation

Wet Soil Conditions

Construction and maintenance activities will not be performed when soil conditions are too wet to adequately support vehicles and equipment, except in emergency situations. If equipment creates ruts, in excess of three (3) inches deep, all maintenance work will be postponed, if possible, until conditions are suitable for travel. If maintenance is required for immediate repair of the power line, MLEA will be responsible for the rehabilitation of disturbed area.

WeedControl

MLEA will control any noxious weed that appears in the ROW, as a result of MLEA's construction activities. All weed control will be completed in accordance to the Green River District Reclamation Guidelines. If Herbicides are to be used, MLEA will submit to BLM VFO, in a timely manner, a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP), for any weed control.

Access

All access will be from existing roads and two tracks and along the granted right-of-way.

ReclamationRe-seeding

MLEA will re-seed any areas that are cleared as a result of MLEA construction activities. All re-seeding efforts will be completed by MLEA and will be completed in accordance to the Green River District Reclamation Guidelines. Any and all re-seeding will be completed between August 15th and November 30th.

Maintenance

MLEA will keep the power lines in a safe and usable condition at all times in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code.

No toxic substances are used in the construction of any of MLEA power lines. All construction waste will be hauled back and disposed of in MLEA owned dumpsters.

It is anticipated that this power line will be inspected on a semi-annual basis, with maintenance to be completed as needed. All inspections will be completed from MLEA owned vehicles and/or MLEA Contractor vehicles and completed by authorized MLEA personnel and/or Contractor.

MLEA will do everything within reason and within its power to prevent fires on or near the construction area during the construction of this power line, as well as throughout the term of the ROW. Each vehicle used on the job site will be equipped with a radio and fire extinguisher. All litter will be taken off the job site.

Termination and Restoration

If the use of the power line is discontinued for a period of one year or longer and is no longer needed in the foreseeable future; MLEA will remove the power line at MLEA's expense and will restore the ROW, as much as possible, to its original condition.

2.2. No Action Alternative

Under this action, BLM would not approve the proposal of the relinquish, rebuild, reroute/new construction on Federal Land.

2.3. Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

There were no other alternatives identified aside from the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives that would meet the purpose and need of this project where this is an existing overhead power line authorized under Right-of-Way UTU-0-005579.

2.4. Conformance With BLM Land Use Plan

The proposed action would be in conformance with the Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (October 2008). The RMP/ROD decision allows ROWs on public lands in accordance with the Realty Decisions. It has been determined that the proposed action and alternative(s) would not conflict with any decisions throughout the plan..

2.5. Relationships To Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans

This EA was prepared by the BLM in accordance with NEPA of 1969 and in compliance with all applicable regulations and laws passed subsequently, including the President's Council on Environmental Quality regulations, and U.S. Department of Interior requirements and guidelines, as listed in the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1.

Uintah County: The proposed project is consistent with the Uintah County General Plan 2012-as amended. The Uintah County General Plan contains specific policy statements addressing public land, multiple-use, resource use and development, access, and wildlife management. In general, the plan indicates support for development proposals such as the proposed action through the plan's emphasis on multiple-use public land management practices, responsible use and optimum utilization of public lands resources. The County, through the Plan, supports the development of natural resources as they become available, as new technology allows.

Chapter 3. Affected Environment:

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This chapter presents the potentially affected existing environment (i.e., the physical, biological, social, and economic values and resources) of the impact area as identified in the Interdisciplinary Team Checklist found in Appendix A. This chapter provides the baseline for comparison of impacts/consequences described in Chapter 4.

3.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources

There are no historic properties affected with the proposed project.

3.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns

No Native American Religious Concerns are associated with this project.

3.3. Vegetation

The dominant vegetation classes in the Project Area are included in the table below, along with the representative plant species associated with each vegetation class. The dominant plant species present in the Project Area overall include: big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), mat saltbush (*Atriplex corrugata*), Gardner saltbush (*Atriplex gardneri*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), broom snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), spiny hopsage (*Grayia spinosa*), winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*), black greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), green Mormon tea (*Ephedra viridis*), Torrey Mormon tea (*Ephedra torreyana*), plains pricklypear (*Opuntia polyacantha*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), needleandthread (*Hesperostipa comata*), galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*), Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), saline wildrye (*Leymus salinus*), western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), and sand dropseed (*Sporobolus cryptandrus*).

Table 3.1. Dominant Vegetation in Project Area

Vegetation Class	Dominant/Representative Vegetation
Southern Rocky Mountain Woodland	<p>Trees: twoneedle pinyon (<i>Pinus edulis</i>) and Rocky Mountain juniper (<i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>).</p> <p>Shrubs: Bigelow sagebrush (<i>Artemisia bigelovii</i>), fourwing saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>), alderleaf mountain mahogany (<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>), rubber rabbitbrush (<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>), broom snakeweed (<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>), Gambel oak (<i>Quercus gambelii</i>), wax current (<i>Ribes cereum</i>), skunkbush sumac (<i>Rhus trilobata</i>), and plains pricklypear (<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i>).</p> <p>Grasses: sideoats grama (<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>), blue grama (<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>), needleandthread (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>), galleta (<i>Pleuraphis jamesii</i>), Nelson's needlegrass (<i>Achnatherum nelsonii</i>), prairie junegrass (<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>), and muttongrass (<i>Poa fendleriana</i>).</p> <p>Forbs: James' buckwheat (<i>Erigeron jamesii</i>), spreading fleabane (<i>Erigeron divergens</i>), and fineleaf hymenopappus (<i>Hymenopappus filifolius</i>).</p>

Warm & Cool Desert Alkali-Saline Wetland	<p>Shrubs: big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>), winterfat (<i>Krascheninnikovia lanata</i>), and black greasewood (<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>).</p> <p>Grasses: saltgrass (<i>Distichlis spicata</i>), basin wildrye (<i>Leymus cinereus</i>), beardless wildrye (<i>Leymus triticoides</i>), alkali sacaton (<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>), and seaside arrowgrass (<i>Triglochin maritima</i>).</p> <p>Forbs: verrucose seapurslane (<i>Sesuvium verrucosum</i>) and Mojave seabite (<i>Suaeda moquinii</i>).</p>
Great Basin Scrub	<p>Shrubs: fourwing saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>), shadscale (<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>), mat saltbush (<i>Atriplex corrugata</i>), Castle Valley saltbush (<i>Atriplex cuneata</i>), Gardner saltbush (<i>Atriplex gardneri</i>), budsage (<i>Picrothamnus desertorum/Artemisia spinescens</i>), black greasewood (<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>), big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), winterfat (<i>Krascheninnikovia lanata</i>), green Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>), Torrey Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra torreyana</i>), spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>), shortspine horsebrush (<i>Tetradymia spinosa</i>), and matrimony vine (<i>Lycium barbarum</i>)</p> <p>Grasses: Indian ricegrass (<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>), blue grama (<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>), saltgrass (<i>Distichlis spicata</i>), squirreltail (<i>Elymus elymoides</i>), needleandthread (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>), saline wildrye (<i>Leymus salinus</i>), western wheatgrass (<i>Pascopyrum smithii</i>), galleta (<i>Pleuraphis jamesii</i>), Sandberg bluegrass (<i>Poa secunda</i>), bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>), alkali sacaton (<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>), and sand dropseed (<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>).</p>
Intermountain Basins Cliff, Scree & Badland Sparse Vegetation	<p>Trees: twoneedle pinyon (<i>Pinus edulis</i>) and little Utah juniper (<i>Juniperus osteosperma</i>)</p> <p>Shrubs: big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>), spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>), bitterbrush (<i>Purshia tridentata</i>), black greasewood (<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>), littleleaf mountain mahogany (<i>Cercocarpus intricatus</i>), curl-leaf mountain mahogany (<i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i>), fourwing saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>), mat saltbush (<i>Atriplex corrugata</i>), shadscale saltbush (<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>), Gardner saltbush (<i>Atriplex gardneri</i>), greenleaf manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos patula</i>), crisp-leaf buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum corymbosum</i>), and spiny greasewood (<i>Glossopetalon spinescens</i>).</p> <p>Grasses: Indian ricegrass (<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>)</p> <p>Forbs: yellow spiderflower (<i>Cleome lutea</i>), Rocky Mountain beeplant (<i>Cleome serrulata</i>), and cushion buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum ovalifolium</i>)</p>
Great Basin & Intermountain Shrubland & Steppe	<p>Shrubs: Wyoming big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>wyomingensis</i>), basin big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata</i> ssp. <i>tridentata</i>), bitterbrush (<i>Purshia tridentata</i>), four-wing saltbush (<i>Atriplex canescens</i>), shadscale saltbush (<i>Atriplex confertifolia</i>), Nevada Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra nevadensis</i>), green Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>), rubber rabbitbrush (<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>), spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>), black greasewood (<i>Sarcobatus vermiculatus</i>), or gray horsebrush (<i>Tetradymia canescens</i>).</p> <p>Grasses: Xeric Sites: Indian ricegrass (<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>), needleandthread (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>), Sandberg bluegrass (<i>Poa secunda</i>) Mesic/Montane Sites: pinegrass (<i>Calamagrostis rubescens</i>), timber oatgrass (<i>Danthonia intermedia</i>), tufted hairgrass (<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>), slender wheatgrass (<i>Elymus trachycaulus</i>), Idaho fescue (<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>), spike fescue (<i>Leucopoa kingii</i>), basin wildrye (<i>Leymus cinereus</i>), muttongrass (<i>Poa fendleriana</i>), and bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>).</p>

Great Basin & Intermountain Dwarf-shrubland & Steppe	<p>Shrubs: low sagebrush (<i>Artemisia arbuscula</i>), Bigelow sagebrush (<i>Artemisia bigelovii</i>), fringed sagebrush (<i>Artemisia frigida</i>), black sagebrush (<i>Artemisia nova</i>), slender buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum microthecum</i>), Wyoming big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis</i>), mountain big sagebrush (<i>Artemisia tridentata ssp. vaseyana</i>), Torrey Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>), green Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>), and spiny hopsage (<i>Grayia spinosa</i>)</p> <p>Grasses: Indian ricegrass (<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>), blue grama (<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>), timber oatgrass (<i>Danthonia intermedia</i>), squirreltail (<i>Elymus elymoides</i>), thickspike wheatgrass (<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i>), Idaho fescue (<i>Festuca idahoensis</i>), needleandthread (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>), western wheatgrass (<i>Pascopyron smithii</i>), galleta (<i>Pleuraphis jamesii</i>), muttongrass (<i>Poa fendleriana</i>), Sandberg bluegrass (<i>Poa secunda</i>), and bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>).</p> <p>Forbs: hooker sandwort (<i>Arenaria hookeri</i>), shortstem buckwheat (<i>Eriogonum brevicaule</i>), and Hood's phlox (<i>Phlox hoodi</i>)</p>
Great Basin & Intermountain Dry Shrubland & Grassland	<p>Shrubs: yellow rabbitbrush (<i>Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus</i>), Torrey Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>), green Mormon tea (<i>Ephedra viridis</i>), rubber rabbitbrush (<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>), broom snakeweed (<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>), winterfat (<i>Krascheninnikovia lanata</i>), Parry's rabbitbrush (<i>Ericameria parryi</i>), Cutler's jointfir (<i>Ephedra cutleri</i>), spiny greasebush (<i>Glossopetalon spinescens</i>), plains pricklypear (<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i>), brittle pricklypear (<i>Opuntia fragilis</i>), Stansbury cliffrose (<i>Purshia stansburiana</i>), gray horsebrush (<i>Tetradymia canescens</i>), and (<i>Physocarpus malvaceus</i>).</p> <p>Grasses: Indian ricegrass (<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>), Letterman's needlegrass (<i>Achnatherum lettermanii</i>), purple threeawn (<i>Aristida purpurea</i>), blue grama (<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>), needleandthread (<i>Hesperostipa comata</i>), saline wildrye (<i>Leymus salinus</i>), sandhill muhly (<i>Muhlenbergia pungens</i>), galleta (<i>Pleuraphis jamesii</i>), muttongrass (<i>Poa fendleriana</i>), Sandberg bluegrass (<i>Poa secunda</i>), bluebunch wheatgrass (<i>Pseudoroegneria spicata</i>), sand dropseed (<i>Sporobolus cryptandrus</i>), and alkali sacaton (<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>).</p>
Introduced and Semi-Natural Vegetation	Variable

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Chapter 4. Environmental Effects:

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This chapter describes the direct and indirect impacts that would be expected to occur upon the implementation of the considered alternative. It also discloses the expected cumulative impacts, which are those impacts resulting from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions.

4.1. Proposed Action

4.1.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources

The proposed action will not affect any historic properties.

4.1.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns

No Native American religious properties will be affected for the proposed action.

4.1.3. Vegetation

The Proposed Action could remove or disturb up to approximately 3.86 total acres of vegetation habitat, primarily in mixed desert shrub communities. The applicant would conduct reclamation on all disturbed areas no longer required for safe operations once the lines have been installed.

Direct impacts to vegetation would primarily be associated with clearing of vegetation during construction and degradation of habitat through soil compaction and loss of topsoil. Indirect impacts to vegetation resources may include the spread and establishment of introduced, undesirable plant species. The extent and severity of these invasions would depend on the amount of initial vegetation removal, the success of reclamation and revegetation, and the degree and success of noxious weed control efforts.

4.2. No Action

4.2.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources

The proposed action will not affect any historic properties.

4.2.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns

No Native American religious properties will be affected for the proposed action.

4.2.3. Vegetation

No surface disturbance would occur under the No Action alternative because the proposed line(s) would not be approved. Therefore there would be no effects to vegetation. Vegetation in the area would remain in its current condition. Erosion rates would remain at current levels.

4.3. Cumulative Impacts

4.3.1. Cultural: Archaeological Resources

The proposed action will not affect any historic properties.

4.3.2. Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns

No Native American religious properties will be affected for the proposed action.

4.3.3. Vegetation

The CIAA for vegetation is the Vernal Planning Area (BLM 2008a). The Vernal RMP analysis indicates surface disturbance and removal of vegetation from cumulative activities would be 187,363 acres between 2008 and 2018.

Surface disturbance would reduce soil productivity, disturb vegetation communities, and accelerate erosion for the lifetime of all surface disturbing projects until such time that final reclamation is deemed successful in terms of soil stability and soil productivity as measured by amounts and types of vegetative cover and forage. Each acre of disturbance also destroys native vegetation, and vegetative cover and introduces or spreads undesired plant species, which may reduce species biodiversity. Noxious weeds and invasive species already exist throughout the CIAA. In general, soils in the Uinta Basin are very thin, slow to develop, and difficult to reclaim because of the arid climate and lack of organic material. The Proposed Action could remove or disturb up to approximately 3.86 total acres of vegetation habitat. The No Action Alternative would not contribute to cumulative impacts.

Chapter 5. Tribes, Individuals, Organizations, or Agencies Consulted:

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[Describe consultation efforts here.]

Table 5.1. List of Persons, Agencies and Organizations Consulted

Name	Purpose & Authorities for Consultation or Coordination	Findings & Conclusions
Tribal Consult	Consulted on as required by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. 1531)	<p>All tribes affiliated with lands in the proposed project area were consulted before August 2015. The Hopi tribe is the only tribe to respond. The Hopi Tribe has responded by letter dated August 24, 2015, that there are no concerns relative to the proposed action.</p> <p>No Traditional Cultural Properties (TPCs) are identified within the APEs. The proposed projects will not hinder access to or use of Native American Religious Sites</p>
Utah State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	<p>Consultation for undertakings, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act (MHPA) (16 USC 470)</p> <p>36 CFR 800.4(d)(1)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Consulted on as required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) (16 U.S.C. 470)</p>	<p>Consultation letter was sent to the State Historic preservation Officer (SHPO) on April 24, 2015 recommending a “no historic properties effected” determination. We received their concurrence to our determination on May 4, 2015</p> <p>The Utah state Historic Preservation Office concurred with the determination of No Historic Properties Affected.</p>

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Chapter 6. List of Preparers

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Table 6.1. List of Preparers

Name	Title	Responsible for the Following Section(s) of this Document
Margo Roberts	Realty Specialist	Project Lead
Christine Cimilucia	Botanist	Vegetation

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Chapter 7. Acronyms

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AO Authorized Officer

BLM Bureau of Land Management

DR Decision Record

EA Environmental Assessment

EIS Environmental Impact Statement

ENBB Environmental Notification Bulletin Board

FLPMA Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

FONSI Finding of No Significant Impact

ID Interdisciplinary

NEPA National Environmental Policy Act

RFA Reasonably Foreseeable Action

RMP Resource Management Plan

ROD Record of Decision

ROW Right-of-Way

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Appendix A. Interdisciplinary Checklist

Project Title:

NEPA Log Number: DOI—BLM—UT—G010—2015—0136—EA

File/Serial Number: UTU-0—005579

Project Leader: Margo Roberts

DETERMINATION OF STAFF: (Choose one of the following abbreviated options for the left column)

NP = not present in the area impacted by the proposed or alternative actions

NI = present, but not affected to a degree that detailed analysis is required

PI = present with potential for relevant impact that need to be analyzed in detail in the EA

NC = (DNAs only) actions and impacts not changed from those disclosed in the existing NEPA documents cited in Section D of the DNA form. The Rationale column may include NI and NP discussions.

Determina- tion	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
RESOURCES AND ISSUES CONSIDERED (INCLUDES SUPPLEMENTAL AUTHORITIES APPENDIX 1 H-1790-1)				
NI	Air Quality & Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Emissions will occur from vehicles in the project area, but those impacts will be short term & transitory so they will not be detectable by monitors or models. No standards have been set by EPA or other regulatory agencies for greenhouse gas emissions and climate change is still in its earliest stages of formulation. Global scientific models are inconsistent, and regional or local scientific models are lacking so that it is not technically feasible to determine the net impacts to climate due to greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that greenhouse gas emissions associated with this action and its alternative(s) would be negligible.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NP	BLM Natural Areas	The proposed project does not fall within the boundaries of a BLM Natural Area as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS layers database.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NP	Cultural: Archaeological Resources	The proposed action will not affect any historic properties. SHPO was consulted and concurred with that finding.	Dave Christensen	9/10/2015

Determina- tion	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NP	Cultural: Native American Religious Concerns	There are no Native American Religious Concerns for the proposed project area. The Hopi were the only tribe to respond, and no concerns were raised.	Dave Christensen	9/10/2015
NP	Designated Areas: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	The proposed project does not fall within the boundaries of an ACEC per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and the GIS data base layers.	Margo Roberts	6/19/2015
NP	Designated Areas: Wild and Scenic Rivers	The proposed project is not in a Wild and Scenic Rivers area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	6/19/2015
NP	Designated Areas: Wilderness Study Areas	No Wilderness areas have been designated by the U.S. Congress on BLM lands in the VFO. The proposed project is not in a Wilderness/WSA area per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office RMP/ROD (2008) and GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	6/19/2015
NI	Environmental Justice	No minority or economically disadvantaged communities or populations would be disproportionately adversely affected by the proposed action or alternatives because there are no such communities or populations located in the project area.	Margo Roberts	6/19/2015
NI	Farmlands (prime/unique)	All prime farmlands in Uintah County are irrigated. All unique farmlands in Uintah County are orchards. No irrigated lands or orchards are located in the project area; therefore this resource will not be carried forward for analysis.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NI	Fuels/Fire Management	No Fuels/fire management projects or needs present per VFO GIS data base.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NI	Geology/Minerals/ Energy Production	The proposal does not involve surface disturbance to the degree that geologic conditions or the value of any minerals present would be affected. In addition, the proposal would not preclude any future mineral development.	Justin Snyder	7/2/2015
IP/NW: NI Soils: NI Veg: PI	Invasive Plants/ Noxious Weeds, Soils & Vegetation	IP/NW: No noxious weeds have been previously documented in the Project Area, per BLM GIS review. The applicant would be responsible for control and removal of invasive plant/noxious weed infestations that occur as a result of the Proposed Action. The applicant has committed to control weeds and maintain a current PUP on file with the BLM VFO. With these measures in place, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to contribute to the introduction or spread	IP/NW and Veg.: Christine Cimiluca Soils: James Hereford II	6/22/2015 7/16/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		<p>of invasive plants/noxious weeds in the Project Area.</p> <p>Soils: The soils in the area have been mapped as Blackston, Greybull-Utaline-Badland, Hanksville-Uffens, Hornko, Riemo, Turzo, Uffens, and Wyasket complexes. Most of these soils are loam type soils that vary across the proposed area. These soils can be shallow in areas to very deep in others. Most of these soils derived from Alluvium derived from sandstone, limestone, and shales. These are typically well drained soils, with high runoff potentials according to NRCS-USDA soil survey information. The proposed project will be taking place on existing disturbance, within existing power line poles. No new disturbance is proposed outside the existing ROW. It is not expected that native soils are going to be impacted by the proposed action. Care should be taken when working within the ROW to minimize impacts to soils.</p> <p>Vegetation: Although construction would occur within an existing ROW corridor, up to 3.86 acres of native vegetation could be removed as a result of implementing the Proposed Action. Any areas cleared of vegetation would be reclaimed and reseeded with a BLM approved seed mix.</p>		
NI	Lands/Access	<p>The proposed area is located within the Vernal Field Office Resource Management Plan area, which allows for oil and gas development with associated road, pipeline and power line rights-of-way. Current land uses, within the area identified in the proposed action and adjacent lands, consist of existing oil and gas development, wildlife habitat, recreational use, and sheep and cattle ranching. No existing land uses would be changed or modified by the implementation of the proposed action.</p> <p>The existing right-of-way holders in the project area have been notified of the project.</p> <p>Master Title Plats have been reviewed for conflicts with Public Water Reserves, or existing ROW holders. No ROWs or Public Water Reserves were identified in the project area per the Master Title Plats.</p>	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015

Determina- tion	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		<p>There are several Uintah County Class D roads, and one Class B road within the proposed project area.</p> <p>Coordination/approval with SITLA will need to occur prior to the project being implemented regarding state section 27 and the continuation of the power line onto SITLA lands, as the BLM has no jurisdiction over these lands. (if coordination/approval is stated in proposed action then change to NI)</p>		
NP	Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC)	The proposed project is not located within an identified Land(s) with Wilderness Characteristics' (LWC) area, as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NI	Livestock Grazing & Rangeland Health Standards	Proposed Project is in the boundary of the Rich and Stetson grazing Allotment and will have minimal affect on livestock grazing and rangeland health.	Craig Newman	7/16/2015
NI	Paleontology	A paleontological field survey was completed by the BLM-VFO (geologists B. Gamber and R. Goshen) on November 20, 2014. Paleo clearance was recommended based on the fact that 1) no paleontological resources were identified and 2) the geologic formation present does not have an elevated potential to yield fossils.	Justin Snyder	7/2/2015
NI	Plants: BLM Sensitive	Based on BLM soils models, suitable habitat for the following UT BLM Sensitive plant species is present in the Project Area: horseshoe milkvetch (<i>Astragalus equisolensis</i>), Hamilton milkvetch (<i>Astragalus hamiltonii</i>), and <i>Cleomella palmeriana</i> var. <i>goodrichii</i> . However, these species have not been documented in the Project Area, per BLM GIS review, and it is unlikely that these species would be directly or indirectly impacted as a result of the Proposed Action.	Christine Cimiluca	6/22/2015
NP	Plants: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate	No federally threatened, endangered proposed or candidate plant species are present in the Project Area, per BLM GIS review. Suitable habitat for these species is also not present in the Project Area, per species habitat modelling. Since these species and suitable habitat are not present, they will not be impacted as a result of the Proposed Action.	Christine Cimiluca	6/22/2015

Determina- tion	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Wetlands/Riparian	The proposed project takes place in an area near a mapped riparian zone on BLM lands called the Rasmussen Hollow riparian zone. The current proposal will not alter the current riparian zone since no surface disturbance is being proposed. Most of the disturbance will be within existing ROWs and utilize existing power pole holes.	James Hereford II	7/16/2015
NP	Recreation	The project is not located within a recreation managed area per the Vernal Field Office GIS data layers.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NI	Socio-Economics	No impact to the social or economic status of the county or nearby communities would occur from this project due to its small size in relation to ongoing development throughout the basin.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NI	Visual Resources	Proposed project is located within VRM Class IV, per VFO GIS data base. <i>The action would be allowed under class IV objectives</i>	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NI	Wastes (hazardous/solid)	No chemicals subject to reporting under SARA Title III in amounts greater than 10,000 pounds would be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of annually in association with the project. Trash and other waste materials would be cleaned up and removed immediately after completion of operations.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015
NP	Water: Floodplains	There are no documented floodplains in the Project Area per BLM GIS review and none are anticipated to be impacted as a result of the Proposed Action. No flood plain mapping per as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	06/19/ 2015m
NI	Water: Groundwater Quality	No impact to groundwater is expected based on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed action would not interact directly with ground water (shallowest groundwater along ROW appears to be 765 ft deep. See State of Utah water right 45–2504). • No indirect impacts are expected based on NI determinations for Stormwater, Surface Water Quality and Wastes. • No Underground Sources of Drinking Water, as defined in 40 CFR 144.3, 	Justin Snyder	7/2/2015

Determina- tion	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
		have been identified by the EPA or the State of Utah in the project area		
NI	Water: Hydrologic Conditions (stormwater)	The current proposed action takes place in an area inundated with dry ephemeral washes that transport fluid and sediments during peak runoff periods and seasonal fluctuations in precipitation. The area is also very prone to flooding given the nature of the sediments in the area that typically have slow infiltration rates. The proposed action will not affect the current hydrologic conditions in the area to a degree that would require detailed analysis since the level of disturbance is low and perennial waters are not affected. Applicant will be working within existing ROWs using existing holes.	James Hereford II	6/22/2015
NI	Water: Surface Water Quality	There are no perennial surface waters that flow through the proposed project area as per GIS and on the ground investigations. The area does have mostly dry ephemeral washes that transport fluid during peak runoff periods and from seasonal fluctuations in precipitation, however the current proposed action will not affect overall surface water quality in the area to a degree that would require detailed analysis.	James Hereford II	6/22/2015
NP	Water: Waters of the U.S.	No perennial waters of the U.S. will be impacted by the proposed action, as per GIS review and on the ground investigations. The closest water of the U.S. to this project is the Green River which is approximately 3 miles to the East of the project. Dry ephemeral washes inundate the area and will not be impacted by the proposed action, since very little surface disturbance will take place. Most surface disturbance will be within existing ROWs, using existing power pole holes.	James Hereford II	6/22/2015
NP	Wild Horse and Burro	No herd areas or herd management areas are present within the proposed project area as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015

Determination	Resource/Issue	Rationale for Determination	Signature	Date
NI	Wildlife: Migratory Birds (including raptors)	The project area is anticipated to disturb approximately 3.86 acres. The surrounding area is highly fragmented with roads, power lines, oil and gas, and other infrastructure. The project area is not located within an important bird habitat area and there are no known raptor nests within 1/2 mile. Reclamation upon completion of project is proposed in accordance with the Green River Reclamation Guidelines. In addition, the proponent will install raptor protection / deterrents as proposed within MLEA's Avian Protection Plan. Impacts to migratory birds, including raptors is not anticipated.	Brandon McDonald	07/14/2015
NI	Wildlife: Non-USFWS Designated	The BLM identifies the project area as being within crucial mule deer fawning areas; however, the project area is anticipated to disturb approximately 3.86 acres and the surrounding area is highly fragmented with roads, power lines, oil and gas, and other infrastructure. Reclamation upon completion of project is proposed in accordance with the Green River Reclamation Guidelines. Impacts to big game species are not anticipated to a degree where loss of individuals or a decrease in population would occur.	Brandon McDonald	07/14/2015
NP	Wildlife: Threatened, Endangered, Proposed or Candidate	There are no threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species (including their associated habitats) located within or near the project area.	Brandon McDonald	07/14/2015
NP	Woodlands/Forestry	The proposed project is not within a woodlands/forestry area as per the Green River District, Vernal Field Office GIS Database layers.	Margo Roberts	06/19/2015

FINAL REVIEW:			
Reviewer Title	Signature	Date	Comments
Environmental Coordinator	Stephanie Howard	9/10/2015	
Authorized Officer	Jerry Kenczka	9/15/2015	



